

The Mann to Watch

by Alex Campbell

Thomas C. Mann, who is President Johnson's chief adviser on Latin American affairs, likes to describe himself as a pragmatist. He probably means only that he believes himself to be a practical man. Unfortunately, to many Latin Americans the term conveys a much more derogatory meaning. They think of a pragmatist as being a cynic who is without ideals.

This would be a very poor description of Mr. Mann, the nobility of whose intentions is unchallengeable. But the misunderstanding seems to typify his relations with the Latin Americans. On December 18, 1963, the day before the Senate unanimously confirmed Mr. Mann's nomination as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, President Johnson said: "We expect to speak with one voice on all matters affecting the hemisphere. Mr. Mann, with the support of the Secretary of State and the President, will be that voice." Mr. Mann was promoted this year to Undersecretary for Economic Affairs. He is obviously more the voice than ever. But many Latin Americans seem to wish he weren't.

A fourth-generation Texan and therefore not easily discouraged, Mr. Mann is suspected of harboring a conviction that those Latin Americans who disagree with him publicly actually agree with him in private. He thinks that what keeps them in public disagreement with him, even when in their hearts they know he is right, is their natural disinclination to be observed concurring with a Yanqui, and their fear of their own well-disciplined, stop-at-nothing Communists, which compels them to pretend to show dislike of Mr. Mann's vigorous anti-Communism.

This ingenious if implausible theory may console Mr. Mann, who is not really a pragmatist in even the normal sense of the term, but a romantic. But the patent distrust that many Latin Americans have of him rests on much less fanciful foundations.

Last June, Mr. Mann in an address to the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs pleased progressive Latin Americans by demanding vibrant change, social justice and an end to archaic attitudes, and by spiritedly hinting: "Our own nation was born in revolution." But this April when the Dominican Republic's constitutional rebels began passing out arms to the people in the spirit of 1776, Mr. Mann at once concluded that those rebel leaders who were doing this and the people

who were getting the arms were all Communists. This if true would indicate the presence in Santo Domingo alone of no fewer than 20,000 Communists, a figure that not even General Wessin y Wessin claimed.

Then again, say the Latin Americans, according to Mr. Mann the US dispatched Marines and paratroopers to the Dominican Republic in part so that the Dominicans could choose their own government "free of outside interference." This struck many Latin Americans as a typically cynical remark; for they thought that if it did not express cynicism it was plainly the remark of a fool, and nobody in Latin America, or elsewhere, thinks Undersecretary Mann anything but able. Further, the statement only served to remind them that Mr. Mann helped plan the forcible overthrow of Castro which was attempted at the time of the Bay of Pigs, and he played a part in the actual overthrow of President Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954. Arbenz was accused of being a Communist; after his overthrow, Mann was appointed deputy chief of the US mission in Guatemala City. Mr. Mann discussed the Guatemala incident publicly last year. He said that Arbenz was voted into power by a majority of the people of Guatemala, in free elections, then added that this proved that the United States need not and should not be committed to "support all constitutional governments under all circumstances." In the Guatemala affair, as in the Bay of Pigs planning and in the dispatch of US troops to the Dominican Republic this April, Mr. Mann worked closely with the CIA.

The CIA listed 55 Communists at work in Santo Domingo (some of them, it now seems, were in fact dead or in jail at the time of the uprising). Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation have since been dispatched to Santo Domingo and may do better. What seems, in fact, to have happened is that a revolt of unemployed people with middle-class leadership encountered stiff military resistance, the rebels seized and distributed arms many of which fell into the hands of hooligans (including, no doubt, Communists) who began systematic killing of policemen and other natural foes, and some of the middle-class leaders of the revolt then lost their nerve and took sanctuary in embassies and so forth when law and order collapsed. These middle-class leaders are in the best position to know if it's true that the Communists planned to and